Fron County Register

BY ELI D. AKE. IRONTON, - - MISSOURI THE TY PERSON STATE OF

ST. NICHOLAS.

"Ho! There as the wicket, who rounds at the Such a din in Olympus was ne'er heard be-I would sleep-get ye gone-I'm siling, I'm What the domes there again who is calling

"Arouse ye! Arouse ye! It's dawning sgain-The star that once beamed over Bethlehem The star of the Wagl, that shone on the morn When early's these ed Saviour, the Christ-child was born!"

"Ho!" Ho!" Is it so? Then I'll up and away As soon as the Goblins can harness my

Then he roared such a laugh as he sprang out It startled the stars in the sky overhead,
And they winked at each other as much as to There is something gone wron; and Old Nick is to pay.

It took but a moment to jump in his boots,
To wish himself up in the best of fur suits,
To run to the closet and drag out his pack,
Which he swung with a chuckle across his
broad back;
Then off to the stable he dashed through the Where the reindeer were prancing, all ready to go.

He was up in a jiffy, and cracking his whip,
With a "Hi, there: my hearties!" he let the
reins slip.

Straight down through the welkin they sped like the light
Without panse or turn to the left or the right:
The clouds dragged their skirts to get of of
the track.
The winds shrank alarmed—all quite taken E'en the moon drew in heste a veil over her face So quick cracked the whip and so fast was the pace;
And he pealed out a laugh so jocund and gay
That Aurora woke up long before it was day;
Oh, never such sleigh-ride was ridden before
As that of St. Nick with his rich Christmas Far down in the distance Earth rolled fast

Dark night naving wrapped it in silence se That the children, tucked close in their snug That the children, tucked close in their shag little beds.

Whence nothing peeped out save their cheru-bim heads,

Were dreaming of fairles, of frolic and fun,
And other stern facts of a life just begun.

It was three by the clock, when out on th The tinkle of sleigh-bells and taps of a hoof Made their little hearts bound and flashed round the Earth

A smile such as welcomed the Lamb at its But they woke not. Oh, no! Old Nick is so sly He fastens a padlock on each prying eye.

With a "Whoa, there, my pretties," he stops Lights his pipe, swings his pack, then away to his work Over steeples and house-tops, in windows, down thes.
So fleet, you would think he had wings to his shoes, In pantries he peeps and through bedrooms he whirls, Now kissing the babies, now pinching the Filling up all their stockings with goodles and Nor forgetting the switch, always left for bad

Then on through the play-rooms to plant which grow dolites and drums with such ex-What a jolly fat fellow! so little and spry.

ith round dimpled checks and a fine flash ing eye. Hair eweled with hailstone, and such a red nose, It lights up the pathway wherever he goes! Then his rich, merry haugh -ah! never, I fear Will music so sweet again gladden the year!

But time files apace. Even now a faint ray Strugg.es up through the East as the Herald o The winds wake in protest and scatter the Now, listen! the signal! I hear the cock crow. "Ho, ho!" cries Old Nick, with his cheeriest

"Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good -Edward C. Hancock.

THE BELLS OF CONNYVILLE.

A CHRISTMAS STORY. On a beautiful summer's afternoon, more than fifty years ago, the good people of Connyville hung a chime of bells in the ivymantled belfry of St. John's Church; and after the good parish minister had preached a sermon appropriate to the occasion, it was voted, as their sexton was growing feeble, that Ezra Potts should in future be intrusted with the care of the little church and the ringing of the fine musical bells that had just been hung in the belfry. So Ezra Potts was made sexton, and though thirty years had passed away since the day the chimes were hung, yet he still performed the simple duties of his long-continued office.

He had grown to be nearly fifty-nine years old, and though his dark hair was tinged with silver, his step was firm and light and his strong frame was still unbent. He

and his strong frame was still unbent. He was a sturdy fellow, this Ezra Potts, with a broad, smooth, genial face—a good and merry heart will smooth over a sight of wrinkles—and his eyes were as brimful of mirth as they could be. In fact, this Ezra Potts was as good a man as you often meet, and the children all loved bim dearly and called him Father Potts, and the older folks all loved him, too, and would shake the honest hand and speak to him as Brother Potts. Yes, he was nearly fifty-nine the Christ-mas eve he lighted his lantern and left his cosy cottage to go up the hill through the snow to chime the bells, as was the custom on every Christmas eve since the bells first came to Connyville. He was very happy that night as he walked up the village street, past the shop windows gay with toys and bric-a-brac, and merry with the groups of children gathered 'round to feast their eyes and chatter with their boisterous tongues, for he had in mind the happiness abroad that night and the joy that would be awakened with the children in the morning. Besides, he had bought his wife a new gown and a large-print Bible, which he knew would please her very much, and a little lame girl down the street would find a well-filled stocking beside her bed in the morning, and she would guess that Father Potts

But amidst all this gayety and his own happiness there was something that troubled him. and a sigh escaped his lips, and involuntarily he walked slower as he ascended the hill to ring St. John's bell; and as he wended on his busy thoughts were drifting ten years back, when his daughter Kitty was seventeen—a bright, pretty girl she was, petite in figure, and with a fascinating grace in manner that made her a favorite with all the good people of Connyville. He, Ezra, loved that girl with all his great might and mind; she was such a winsome creature it would have been hard, indeed, for anybody to do otherwise; but if he loved her too fondly he was rebuxed, God knows, and bitterly, too. But amidst all this gayety and his own

terly, too.

As the modest little belle of that quiet vil-As the modest little belle of that quiet village, Kitty had many suitors, for the right sort of a girl will turn the heads of half the awains in any village; but the most favored one was Ephraim Bates, a reputable young farmer of sterling qualities, whom Ezra loved as he would have loved his son, and after a varied courtship of little ups-and-downs, for they had their quarrels and reconciliations which go to make up the early spring-time, in his bashful, awkward way, asked for her hand, which she—she loved to tease the fellow—granted him, after keeping him in agony for a month waiting for her answer, when she could have told him on the spot he might have it if he

to 13 South 5th st. St. LOUIS, MO.

wanted. They were very happy till June he supposed held only a fine, fat Christmas came, with its balmy air and fragrant blos- turkey. came, with its balmy air and fragrant blossoms, for with it came a wild, handsome fellow up from the city down by the sea to while away his time among the hills and trout brooks of Comyville. Now he found Kitty out and made her acquaintance; and a brilliant, well-mannered fellow such as he was just the sort to turn the head of a simple-hearted givl like Kitty, who knew but little of the life beyond her native village, or of the artifices of handsome, reckless men.

Ezra noticed the change in her with pained anxiety, but he held his tongue, hoping the young man would soon quit the place, and that Kitty would as soon forget him. Ephraim was madly jealous of such ardent devotion to his betrothed, and one evening when he had come down from his farm on the hill to call on Kitty he said, in his blunt way, "Kitty, this young man from the city

way, "Kitty, this young man from the city is growing too familiar with you. I must insist on having it stopped."

"What s silly, nonsensical boy you are," laughed Kitty in the gayest manner possible, as though it was the very funniest thing

in the world.
"Maybe I am," he said with a sorrowful sigh. But you are not treating me as I ought to be treated, as you would want to be "How do you want to be treated?" she

"How do you want to be asked, coakingly.

"Just as you would want me to treat you," he replied. "Now suppose," and he fixed himself as if he was about making a great and valid point, "I should run half my time with Susie Phelps or Sally Brown, my time with Susie Phelps or Sally Brown, beliry stairs, and rang the belis again like five great furies. laughing in the heartiest and most provoking manner. ''Oh, I should enjoy that so much! And it would be such fun! And—oh, dear!

Ephraim Bates and Susie Phelps.

ph—'' she was very sober and very ironical -''you couldn't do such a thing were you to try a life-time. I am the only pretty girl," and she tossed her head and looked very vain, "who ever had a particle of sympathy for overgrown Ephraim Bates." Ephraim was stung deeply by these words, for they were cruel words for her to speak. Besides, he, like other men, had some conceit, and he believed he could have wooed and won old 'Squire Phelps's daughter as successfully as he had wooed and won Kitty

"Kitty," he said, harshly, "after engaging yourself to me I am sure you have no right to allow any gentleman to be so de-voted to you as this strange fellow is. Again

must insist on its being stopped." Kitty knew as well as anybody he was right, and it galled her to be told of it, especially by Ephraim. But for the world she wouldn't let him know it galled her. 'Oh, what a queer boy you are, Eph!" she answered, pleasantly, and then added, with

answered, pleasantly, and then added, with a keen touch of sarcasm, "Don't you know, Sonnie, that if I were confined exclusively to you for male society I should get so sick and so tired of you I should never, never want to see you again as long as I live?"

Had Ephraim been a shrewd observer of character, especially of female character, he would not have allowed himself to be greatly aggrayated for he would have known that it aggravated, for he would have known that it pleased Kitty best to have him so.

"Kitty," he said, sharply, "you don't love me—you can't love me if you speak as you think."

"Oh, dear!" cried Kitty, bursting into another fit of laughing, "what a silly, silly boy! Did I ever tell you, did I ever tell anybody, I loved you? Now be honest, Eph, did I?" "Didn't you promise you would marry

me?" he asked, sternly.

"No, I didn't," she retorted, sharply. "I may have told you something—I presume I did—that led you to believe I might, some time, do such a foolish thing, but never in my life have I told you I loved you. But what has that to do with it, anyway?" "What has that to do with it?" he cried, fiercely. "Does not that promise imply you

"Oh, dear, no!" she retorted, with a languid unconcern. "It don't imply anything, only that I promised a silly fellow something I hadn't ought to. That's all." "Are you in earnest?" he cried.

"Never was more so," she answered. "Then we will break our engagement, and you, Kitty Potts, will rue the day it was broken."
"Suit yourself," she said, carelessly, and

tossing their engagement ring to the floor, Ephraim picked it up and left the house. Poor Kitty burst into tears when he had gone, for she never supposed their quarrel would result in such a manner. She thought, however, like all previous quarrels, it would end happily; so she soon cheered up and gave herself no further trouble, but flirted more boldly with her wild and handsome

In the past Ephraim had been in the habit of walking with her to church on the pleasant Sabbath evenings; and ever before they had reconciled their little difficulties on that had reconciled their little difficulties on that day. Sunday came, but Ephraim came not with it, and the scalding tears started from her eyes, and she reproached herself bitterly for her cruel words, and would have fallen at his feet and pleaded for his forgiveness, for she loved him with all her sorrowing

She walked to church alone that night, where she saw Ephraim with 'Squire Phelps's pretty daughter Susie, and, poor foolish girl! she swore revenge on Ephraim Bates, and the next night it was executed. In the morning it was noised abroad that Kitty Potts had gone away with the wild, handsome fellow, and was married to him in the city out by the sea.

It was near a death-blow to Ezra. For days and weeks he lingered between life and death with a raging fever in his head. But he mended slowly, and when he could go about his work again he seemed almost as sunny as he was in other days, but his heart
—ah, no! the great wound was not healed yet. From that terrible day he never spoke her name, and every villager forbore to mention it in his presence. She had written him for forgiveness; but some things there are men are not divine enough to forgive, and Ezra set his heart hard against forgiv-ing the cruel wrong Kitty had done her family and her betrothed. She never wrote him after that; but more than a year afterward he heard that her reckless husband, tiring of her charms and beauty, had abandoned her and left her alone and friendless in the great unmerciful city down by the sea.

But Father Potts cheered himself up and wended his way up the hill, and opened the great door of St. John's, and climbed the belfry stairs, and chimed the fine musical bells that sounded merrier and more musical than ever, for it seemed to Ezra and it seemed to all the villagers, that the bells rang sweeter in the Christmas times. But hearts are gayer then, and life is brighter then, and the star glimmers in the East again and makes Heaven seem nearer and

dearer.

Presently Father Potts put on his coat, shut the belfry door, came down the stairs and opened the great door to go out into the street; but just as he was about stepping from the threshold the light from the iantern fell upon a bundle lying on the topmost

step.

'Oh, my!' he cried, holding his lantern above his head and bending down that he might more distinctly see the object, 'Oh, my! what now? A present maybe for my wife, ho, ho, or for me, ho, ho! Who'd a thought that Ezra Potts, sexton, 'd find a present on old St. John's steps? Nobody I swear! Here I've been attending this old stone church for more'n thirty years, and tostone church for more'n thirty years, and to-night I've a present for me or for my wife, ho, ho!" And Ezra laughed and shook himself, and bent close to and laid his hand

on the bundle.

"A Christmas turkey," he cried, slapping his sides, "Oh, a good fat Christmas turkey, ho, ho! A fine fat turkey for Christmas, ha, ha! Won't my wife—oh, won't my wife be glad when she sees this!" and he laid hold of the bundle of the state of the st

he supposed held only a fine, fat Christmas turkey.

''Ohl, my goodness! oh, my soul! It's a baby! a little live baby, as sure as I'm born. O-oh, my, my—oh, my Lord!" and Ezra Potts held his dim light very close to the sleeping infant's face, and bent his face very close to it, that he might not be mistaken and find it a turkey after all.

''It's a real live baby!" he cried again.
''Oh, my soul! oh, my wife! won't she, oh, won't sne be giad? Won't Ezra Potts be glad, too? Won't Ezra Potts and wife be glad together? Oh, dear! a real fine baby.

glad, too? Won't Ezra Potts and wife be glad together? Oh, dear! a real fine baby. Oh, dear! O-oh dear!" And Father Potts fell upon his knees, half laughing, half cryling, as he bent very close to the babe.

"Oh, my wife, my beloved wife, our daughter's come back to us just as she came to us at first! on Christmas-eve, too. Oh, my! to Ezra Potts and wife a daughter, ho, ho!" And Ezra shook himself very hard again, and his eves glistened with tears, al-

again, and his eyes glistened with tears, al-though he tried hard to push them back. "The good Lord sent her!" he cried, winding the fine white fiannel around the babe.

'Yes, the good Lord sent her, and He knowed just where to send her—bless His name—and Ezra Potts and wife sha'n't disappoint the Lord, neither. Oh, my soul! what a Christmas present! a present straight to Ezra Potts and wife from the Lord. Oh, what a sexton is Ezra Potts! What a blessed sexton, what a lucky sexton! To Ezra Potts and wife—" and he laughed so hard again he couldn't for his life have added "daughter;"

great furies.

"Praise the Lord!" he cried, tugging on the ropes like a mad man, "for His mercy endureth forever. To Ezra Potts, sexton, and Dorothy, his wife—oh, my soul!" and he pulled more madly than before, which brought the grave-digger, who lived in the small red house just behind the church, into the belify. There isn't a bit of doubt that he believed the sexton crayy for hesides ring. believed the sexton crazy, for, besides ring-ing the bells like mad, his coat and hat were off and his long gray hair was flying over his

head and face.
"Praise the Lord!" yelled Ezra. "Praise the Lord—to Ezra Potts, sexton of old St. John's, and Dorothy, his beloved wife, a daughter.'' And on went the mad, musical bells, and speechless stood the grave-dig-ger, as he watched the sexton while he rang the Christmas chimes as they had never rung

"A daughter, I tell you, Corney! A little live daughter to Ezra Potts, sexton, and Dorothy, his wife!" and letting go the ropes he donned his coat and hat in an instant, and grasping the grave-digger's hand he hurried him down the stairs at a great rate.
"See that, Corney—see that there!" cried
Ezra, when he had unrolled the infaut.

"Ain't that a Christmas present, Corney, ain't it, though?" and he slapped the grave-digger hard on the back, who looked more stupefied than ever.
"To Ezra Potts and wife, I tell you, Cor-

ney—I tell you a live daughter!" He put his hands on Corney's shoulder and shook him with all his strength, which aroused the grave-digger so much he bent over a trifle that he might more plainly see the sweet, placid face of the sleeping infant. Corney was a very slow fellow. His business was a slow one, for, as the people of Connyville were usually a long-lived, tenacious set, grave-digging was not a driv-ing businese at any time. But, finding his

petrified tongue, he said,
"Wa'al, I du declar'! Whar did you cum by that air chick?" To Ezra and Dorothy Potts from the Lord," solemuly answered the sexton.
"Tis, heigh?" said Corney. "Wa'al, I "We kinder reckon as how I wouldn't want the mind."

Lord to bring many sich critters to me."

"Ah," said Ezra, shaking his fingers, and taking his bundle tenderly in his arms, "don't be scared, Corney, He knows into what fold to send His little lost lambs. Oh, my soul, yes! He knows where to send 'em -to Ezra Potts and wife, ho, he!" And locking the great door he hurried off into the village. "Here comes Father Potts," cried a band

of youngsters on a street corner, as Ezra came in sight. "Have you got anything for

Potts really had a baby in the queer-looking bundle he was carrying.
"Can't we please see your baby?" asked a

little girl, shyly.
"Why, bless your heart—bless my heart bless everybody's heart!-come right along and have a look—ail of you come and have a look. My soul! come and have a look, all of you." And they all scampered along and hurrahed for Father Potts and his baby, and for Mother Potts and her baby; and every fresh recruit that joined the merry rabble hurrahed as loud and became as wild as any of them. Tradesmen left their shops and customers to see what under the sun the matter was, and customers rushed to the doors that they, too, might see the goings on; and all the quiet village knew good Father Potts had found a baby on the granite steps of old St. John's, and all the quiet village went wild with Father Potts.

By the time he had reached the door of his cozy cottage the infant had awakened and began crying, which made the children shout the louder, for beyond a doubt Father Potts had a real live baby; and Mrs. Patter Potts had a real live baby; and Mrs.
Potts, hearing such an uncommon racket,
hastened to the door to discover its cause.
"Oh, my beloved!" cried Ezra. "My
wife and happiness! I've such a present for
you—O-oh such a present!" and as the score
of children came trooping in, Mrs. Potts
thought her husband and half the village
had lost their heads, and she was so astonished at such strange proceedings that for ished at such strange proceedings that for a minute she could not have uttered a word

a minute she could not have uttered a word to save herself.

"What have you got, Ezra?" she cried, when she could find her tongue.

"A baby, a baby, a live baby!" shouted the little rabble.

"What baby—whose baby?" she asked, looking first at one and the at another of the group and searce hell stying her own.

the group, and scarce believing her own "Ours!" shouted Ezra. "To Ezra Po'ts, sexton, and Dorothy, his beloved wife, a daughter." And he laughed, and the children laughed, and Mrs. Potts laughed in spite of herself, and undoing the bundle she took out the nicest, sweetest little baby any-body ever did see, which made the children laugh and clap their hands and think that Father Potts had found the most wonderful

child in the world. "Oh, dear!" said Mrs. Potts, "what s-why, what a dear little creature! Whose can it be, Ezra?"

"Ours!" answered Ezra, solemnly.
"Yours!" cried the children, who had gathered close around it, as children always gather around when there is anything to be

"How, Ezra? Tell me something—any-thing that will relieve me, for the suspense is really awful."

He told the children it was best they He told the children it was best they should go away and come again on the morrow, when they could see the babe as much as they liked; so they scampered happlly away, hurrahing for the new-found baby and the Pottses. And then Father Potts related to his anxious wife how he had discovered the child, and how he was very sure it was a Christmas present sent them from the Lord. Mrs. Potts was as joyous as her exuberant husband, and she laughed and chatted away to the little mite of humanity as gayly as a young mother would have done. gayly as a young mother would have done.
And then they discovered, tied around its neck with a piece of ribbon, and hidden in its snowy bosom, a rumpled note, stained with tears, maybe, which Ezra, after putting on his glasses, read as follows:

less child. I beseech you with all my broken heart, I beseech you with these scalding tears to keep my babe, to watch and tend and care for it just as you would your own, just as you did the little life that blessed you once, that made you happy once, long

Ezra, what is it she says about our little babe? Read that part over again."
"I beseech you with all my broken heart "I beseech you with all my broken heart,
I beseech you with these scalding tears to
keep my babe, to watch and tend and care
for it just as you would your own, just as
you did the little life that blessed you once,
that made you so happy once, long ago."

"Just as you did the little life that blessed
you once, that made you so happy once,
long ago," repeated Mrs. Potts, bending low
to hide the falling tears. "Now go on, Exra,
and finish."

"There are others richer in purse than you with whom I might have left my child; but your great richness of heart, your tender sympathies, your love of God and man are riches I prize for my babe above the wicked, fascinating wealth of the world, which is so alluring, but oh! so unsatisfying. Oh, God! if my wretched life had been as spotless as yours; if the bleak winds of temptation had been as gentle to me as they have been to you; if Christ had tended me with that unfaltering care He tends the tiny sparrow, my babe might be calmly sleeping now on this breast, so torn and tortured with ceaseless agony. Again I beseech you to keep my innocent darling, to care for it as you would, as you did your own; and though its parents may have sunk low down in the cruel eyes of this cold, wintry world, remember how He, born in a Bethlehem manger, gave you that blessed hope of redemption which makes your life so bright and glorious—and this little babe may grow to bless and comfort you when your years are many and your feet are trembling near the grave. Weste over her "There are others richer in purse than your years are many and your feet are trembling near the grave. Watch over her. I beseech you; guide her aright, I beseech you, and may Christ bless you; may Christ bless my baby as He has not blessed its

"SUFFERING MOTHER." It was a very fortunate thing for Esra Potts and wife that, just as he had finished reading, the babe began to worry and re-quire the combined attention of the two joy-ful Pottses, for it would have been a most difficult matter for either of them to speak because of the tears that filled their eyes and the great lump that had risen in their throats. In a few minutes, however, sweetooking Mrs. Potts, in her neat gray dress, frilled cap, and spectacles, and whose dispo-sition, by the way, was every bit as amiable

sition, by the way, was every bit as amiable as her looks, said very slowly:

"I have thought, Ezra, ever since you came in, that maybe—maybe it was her child—our Kitty's baby."

"Pshaw!" cried Ezra, striking his foot very hard upon the floor and looking as savagely at his beloved wife Dorothy as it was possible for him to do. "Never talk such nonsense again. I wouldn't stand it; no, indeed, I wouldn't!"

"Perhaps I was wrong in speaking my

"Perhaps I was wrong in speaking my mind, Ezra, but, somehow, I couldn't help it; and, Ezra, don't you think the baby looks a little—just a little—as she did when she was small?" "Nonsense again!" cried the sexton, hit-

ting the floor such a second rap with his foot that it fairly frightened the little creature in his vife's lap half out of all its little senses.
"If you talk any more such infernal stuff I'll sling that bundle plumb into the street—mind you, plumb into the street."

"Why, Ezra!" cried his wife, "you know you wouldn't, would he, baby!" And she kissed it a half dozen times, and fondled it, and made a sight over it, and then held it up for Ezra to kiss, which the old fellow did

for Ezra to kiss, which the old fellow did.
"Well, Dorothy, you must make up your "My mind, Ezra?" she cried. "Make up

mind about what?"

"About keeping it," he answered, pointing at the baby, with a very grave face, though he didn't feel grave—not a bit, good, clever old soul.

the Lord knew well enough where this little ter all, the first requisites. How these wrath of fools," Some people fa thing ought to come-"Oh, my Lord!" cried Ezra. "Oh, my soul, what a woman! My soul, what a wife and what a ba-bee! Yes, to Ezra Potts, sexton, and Dorothy. his wife—a daughter—praise the Lord, a daughter." And Ezra laughed and shook himself, and laughed and shook himself, and laughed and shook himself, and laughed and shook the setters walls and set Mr. us?" they shouted.

"Ho, ho!" he cried, merrily, "not a thing—it's a baby for my wife."

"A baby for your wife!" they all shouted with boisterous glee. "A baby for your wife. "A baby for Father Potts's baby!"

"A baby for gour wife!" they all shouted and shook himself, and laughed and shook the cottage walls, and set Mrs. Potts to laughing; which, in spite of all they But none of them could believe that Father | could do, set the tears a-rolling down their

They must have been the happiest, jolliest folks in Connyville that night—or anywhere else, in fact. But by and by Mrs. Potts put the baby away to bed and made Ezra go and sleep in the company chamber, lest he would forget himself and crush the little creature. And, Mrs. Potts's word for it, he came to visit the hed no less than four times in the night to make himself sure the child had not been surreptitiously spirited away while his good wife slept.

When the morning came-goodness, what when the morning came—goodness, what a morning that is to be remembered!—it was such a time as was never known before or since in that house. In the first place, the good old parish minister came clattering in before they had eaten breakfast and begged they would excuse his haste and the absence of his neckerchief, but he must see that child. Sakes alive! they'd excuse anything of him that morning, and he must needs stay and have some breakfast and offer thanks afterward, for Ezra said that on that occasion thanks must be offered by one more thorough in the business than himself; he wanted it done up brown, he said—the curl-

Then came the children trooping back again, bringing little presents and things; and soon afterward came all sorts of older people bringing larger presents and other things; and they all made so much of the babe and declared it was the most wonderful little creature anybody ever did see in that part of the world, or anywhere else. And the good minister over in the corner said it all reminded bim of that beautiful scene in the stable of Bethlehem, when the wise men came and gave their gifts to our new-born Christ. He wanted to know, too, if all of them could teach by example the great lesson of forgiveness He taught; if all

great lesson of forgiveness He taught; if all could forgive their repentant debtors as He forgives us our debts. And Ezra, laying his hand on the good minister's, said, with streaming eyes, "Praise the Lord, yes!"

But such presents! Rattleboxes, whistles, all sorts of dolls, wooden horses and candy dogs, and a red soldier with a blue gun, and a real gem of a cradle from old Isaac's, the cabinet-maker, and 'Squire Phelps gave it a hundred dollars in sterling silver. Everybody was so happy, too. If each resident of Connyville had had just such a baby given them they wouldn't have been one bit happier. No, indeed!

them they wouldn't have been one bit happier. No, indeed!

After all had looked at the baby, and taken it in their arms and kissed and talked to it to their heart's content—the baby, by the way, being in the best of humor and seeming to enjoy it all—it was taken up to old St. John's Church to be christened. That church had never known such a festival like that before. The village girls had brought all the flowers the town afforded, and fairly filled the chancel full; the evergreens were so profuse it seemed as if one had somehow strayed into a fairy's grove; and the bells strayed into a fairy's grove; and the bells chimed their merriest, and the organ pealed its loudest, and the choir sang their sweetest, and it was surely a joyful Christmas morning for all the happy village folk.

What do you think they named that little girl? Christmas! Funny, wasn't it? though ever afterward she was known as

When the service was fairly over with the When the service was fairly over with the good parish minister took Ezra off one side and asked of him—he wanted to make sure of it—if his heart was really full of unfeigned forgiveness for all who had done evil against him, and if he had peace and good-will in his heart for everybody, which brought the tears to Ezra's eyes and made his voice tremble as he cried, "Yes, yes, Lord helping me!"

"Can you forgive even your wayward Kitty?" the minister asked, the tears springing to his eyes and his voice trembling, too.

Ezra broke right down at this and sobbed as though the flood-gates of his heart were broken, as though he was sobbing for joy instead of anguish. If he would forgive the wayward, repentant girl and stretch out his wayward, repentant girl and stretch out his wayward.

arms and bid her come home again, how much more Christ-like would be the great-ness of his heart, how much happier would

ness of his heart, how much happier would be his Christmas-day!

"Everything," Exra murmured, in a broken voice; "I can forgive everything."

"Amen!" cried the minister. "What a merry Christmas this is going to be!" And he had to wipe his eyes very hard again to keep the tears from rolling down his cheeks. And then the minister led Father Potts, and good Mother Potts with little Crissy, into the vestry where—yes, their daughter Kitty is in there, and they must be left alone a little while.

Poor repentant, wayward child! she has come to be taken back into the fold again. The rugged mountain paths of life are very bleak and dreary, and home is warm and bright and loving, and she wandered back again to be sheltered, and loved, and forgiven.

again to be sheltered, and loved, and forgiven.

In a little while they all came out of the vestry, and, getting into 'Squire Phelpa's great, comfortable sleigh that was waiting for them at the door, they went straight up to his large, well-furnished house and had the greatest jollification that was ever heard of in that town. And such a Christmas dinner! Well, you may be sure it was a big one, for when the company was all mustered Mrs. Phelps must needs send over to neighbor Brown's and borrow just a dezen plates to make up the sixty that were needed to set the table with.

Ephraim Rates! Oh, yes, he was there, clear, honest fellow! He had forgiven Kitty long ago, and was biding his time with patience when she would come home again—he knew she would ere long, and he could wait—and when their love would be made new and more enduring, for the great crucible through which it had passed had cleaned and purified it.

But Ezra Potts was happiest of them all.

But Ezra Potts was happiest of them all.
Ah, if on each Christmas morning men would forgive all their repentant debtors as He forgives us our debts, how much brighter, merrier the day would be, not only to him who is forgiven, but also to him who forgives! Ezra Potts will tell you that, and Ezra Potts knows.

It was told afterward how the good parish minister—bless his dear old heart!—brought all this happiness about; how he brought Kitty and her babe up from the great city by the sea; how he had her bundle the little creature up and lay it on the granite steps of old St. John's, that Ezra might find it there when he had chimed the merry bells of Yule—Ezra did not know that she had a Yule—Ezra did not know that she had a babe, though the old fellow knew the min-ute he put his eyes on it that it was Kitty's,

I mean only the comparatively poor woman, now—one who has bonnets and dresses sometimes—it is another thing.

Cheap goods are seldom as finely tinted, and they seldom fall into such utter destruction. graceful folds, as rich ones; and when a A man who does not contr bonnet is bought one month, and a walking suit another, the results are not as perfect as when the whole costume is in the hands of one modiste. But He receives no respect. there are ladies who produce a finer ef- said that an angry man "Lord bless us!" cried Dorothy. "It was all made up just the minute you came in, for a large one, for shape and color are, at; and the Word often.

that can not be matched.

Then go out; ask for the thing you want, and do not be beguiled into looking at anything eise. As to the color, try it in a bright light—day or gas—as you wish to wear it. All good New York stores have a room in which to exhibit colors by gas-light, and as navy blue and hunter's green are a dull black by this light, and some shades of sage green turn—to your horror—to lead color, and most purples are quite lost, while a beautiful faint lilac becomes dirty white, this is necessary if you want of himself. He carries with him as

successively bonnets too large and bonnets too small, bonnets, each of which makes you look worse than the other, under a fire of mechanical admiration from the saleswoman: "Oh, charming!" "That certainly becomes you;" "that is lovely;" "that is the most stylish you have put on;" "just the shape for you! I admire that, ma'am;" with madame, fat, comfortable, and with her hair in perfect crimp, advising and even commanding from a short distance, and some ten or fifteen lady customers highly interested in the lady customers highly interested in the affair, gazing at one unreservedly, with that air with which New York women regard each other when unacquainted—all this is enough to break down the self-composure of a nun, or a prima donna. More mistakes are made in the bonnet through nervousness than in any other way. Therefore, persons who can not command the chief milliners of the city to send imported bonnets to their houses for inspection, and to be tried on before their own glasses. I advise choosing a shape and the stuff to cover and trim it. Then don't trim it yourself, unless you know how.

If you are in doubt about the color for a dress, buy black. You can always enliven and enrich it with trimmings and ribbons. It lasts better than anything else. It is more becoming to more people than any one color, and if you are very stout it is actually the only thing you should wear for a dress. Moreover, there are gay colors which look well in the hair and at the bosom which can not be worn with anything but black, and no color looks ill with it.

Self-Centrel.

THERE is in the human mind an

principal source of the sublime. It more than delights—it awas and fills with admiration. The mighty engine, the swift lightning, and the thundering cataract are sublime, because they exhibit power. Man looks at them and feels his own insignificance in their presence. And yet to inspire awe, power must be controlled, otherwise it terrifies and fills with dire dismay. The sight of the with dire dismay. The sight of the steam-engine, moving speedily over the track, drawing after it the whole train of cars freighted with human life and valuable merchandise, never becomes old or common. The workman will cease his work every day to watch it, and when it has passed he resumes his task with the thought, power is grand when it is controlled. But suppose the engineer falls asleep or neglects his duty, the power of the engine is robbed of its grandeur, and it becomes a thing to be feared, and almost to be hated. The workman looks at the frightful wreck of life and property, and then he knows that the charm of power lies in its being strong, yet controlled. Who is to blame for the wreck? The engine? its being strong, yet controlled. Who is to blame for the wreck? The engine?

to blame for the wreek? The engine?
No, you say, the one who ought to have guided its power.

There is a wonderfully good cheer in an open fire. As the business man comes home at night, he loves the hearth that glows for him. But when he comes near and finds his dwelling all ablaze, no longer does he love the power of flame, for it is fast spreading beyond the power of control. Yet the flame is not to blame, Man is reverent to the power of electricity, and he gladly makes it his messenger while he can control it, but when it slips from his guidance, and becomes the forked lightning, and shivers the hardy oak of his field, or makes ruin of his habitation, Oh, how he bows with fear before the power he can not control. he can not control.

You may sometimes see a man who bears all the elements of a noble manthe likeness was so perfect—for the parish minister—and bless his heart again —had strong faith the little child would lead them back, and in very pleasant places, too.—

Buffalo Express.

Taste in Dress.

"She has a great deal of taste," often means only "She has a great deal of money." Now that the fashionable milliner and dress-maker recognize certain laws of color, the fashionable woman, with a long purse, has simply to put herself into their hands, and she will never shock the eye by garments that, as the Parisans say, "swear at each other." But for the poor woman—and I mean only the comparatively poor to lolow. There is no sight money is a minimum to a money is a minimum to a money. The parish hood, yet whose character is a wreck. He commands no respect from his fellows; he deserves none. He does not even respect himself. What is the matter? Is he to be blamed? Why more than the engine, the fire, or the lightning? Evidently, because each man has the ability to control his own power, and if he does not, he himself must suffer. He can do what havilla to do. His is an engine, moving with all his tites, passions, personal habit everything about the man. engineer. He must be conducted.

The likeness was so perfect—for the parish hood, yet whose character is a wreck. He commands no respect from his fellows; he deserves none. He does not the engine, the fire, or the light-ning? Evidently, because each man has the ability to control his own power, and if he does not, he himself must suffer. He can do what havilla to do. His is an engine, moving with all his tites, passions, personal habit everything about the man. engineer. He must be conducted to the parish hood, yet whose character is a wreck. He commands no respect from his fellows; he does not the engine, the fire, or the light-ning? Evidently, because each man whood, yet whose character is a wreck. ger of a wreck that is almost follow. There is no sight mo

people manage is a mystery to others, for they are artists in their line. But there are certain things that any one can do who wishes to look well-dressed. often give us as an excuse for wrongthere are certain things that any one can do who wishes to look well-dressed. The first is—take thought about it. Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well. Before you go out to shop make up your mind as to what you want. Without this you will be talked into buying something that you will detest until it is worn out, ("which has often occurred to me.") After you have decided upon fabric and color, take a pencil and get at the exact sam you can afford per yard for the piece goods—at the number of yards of ribbon you want. A half quarter too much wastes money, or half a yard too little spoils a dress that can not be matched.

Then go out; ask for the thing you want, and do not be beguiled into look-

while a beautiful faint lilac becomes dirty white, this is necessary if you want to be sure what you are buying.

I think that, except to very handsome people, who are quite conscious of their own charms, buying a ready-made bonnet is the most trying of ordeals. To stand before the glass with one's hair out of crimp—and whose is not at such a time? there is a fate in it—and don successively honnets too large and bonnessions, but have them in subjection. It is not that we want people without passions, but that we want them controlled. You can not help loving the black-eyed, mischievous little boy, full of tricks, better than the one who is always a sober, staid, little man, and when they become men, the one who has the strongest feelings under the best control, will make the best neighbor, friend, and statesman.—The Campus.

Preferring Death to Liberty.

THE St. Vincent de Paul Penitentiary THE St. Vincent de Paul Penitentiary here has in it a number of defaulters of good families undergoing terms of from two to seven years. Among them are Jean Satem Paquette, ex-cashier of the Hochelaga Bank, and Alexis Tourville, ex-book-keeper to a merchant. Their terms expire soon. As the time for Paquette's release approached he became moody, and at last refused to touch food. He persisted in his refusal for several days. Yesterday morning, under the influence of threats that nourishment would be forced into him by violence, he begin to eat again.

ishment would be forced into him by violence, he begin to eat again.

To-day Paquette heard feeble groans proceeding from Tourville's cell, which adjoins his. He called one of the guardians, who found Tourville lying in a pool of blood, his throat horribly gashed. He had tried to kill himself by means of broken glass from a small mirror he had been permitted to have in his cell. Physicians were summoned and the wounds were sewed up, but his recovery is very doubtful. It is thought that he dreaded the idea of living to meet his friends again, particularly the lady to whom he had been engaged.—

Montreal Telegram.

THE newest design for scarf-pins is a gold candlestick in which is set a miniature candle, having for its wick a diamond of size and brilliancy to suit the taste and purse of the purchaser. SHOULDER HEAVE

The state of the s